

Brown, Shirley K. (HHS)

Subject: support for HB 91

To: Senate Judiciary Committee

I hope to be able to stop by the hearing on HB 91 before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, but it depends on schedule for HB 804 and Judiciary budget.

Court Appointed Special advocates are volunteers who are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the court. Judges appoint trained volunteers to be their "eyes and ears." We have 400 CASA volunteers advocating for almost 1,000 children in the foster care system. We support HB 91 and urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to pass this bill.

We believe this bill is good for children and for those who advocate for their best interest.

Here are several parts we think are helpful:

1. allowing testimony by telephone, videoconference or other means is less stressful to the child.
2. requiring professionals involved in delivery or care of an infant to report if the infant is affected by a dangerous drug. With the prevalence of methamphetamine, this is a needed requirement.

Again, CASA of Montana supports HB 91.

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